

S-2781

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Effect of the Rainy Season on the Infiltration
of Men and Supplies Through Laos

The rainy season in the Laotian Panhandle extends from May through September, the months of maximum rainfall being generally July and August. In May and early June the rainfall is intermittent so that the roads have time to partially dry out. The rainy season does not always begin or end at the same time each year.

Supplies

Truck movements are greatly complicated during the rainy season in Laos, because of difficult terrain and the poor road system and in previous rainy seasons truck traffic has been negligible. However, the North Vietnamese have made numerous improvements to the road system during the past three years and there was a clearly identifiable effort during the past dry season to improve its wet-weather capacity. The throughput capacity from North Vietnam through the Laotian Panhandle to South Vietnam during the rainy season is estimated at 150 tons a day. This is significantly less than the estimated dry season capacity of 550 tons a day.

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indicate that the North Vietnamese are moving more trucks into Laos this year than they did in 1967 (see tabulation below). Furthermore, there is more movement southward through the Panhandle this year than previously.

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Average Number of Trucks Per Day

	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>
May	16	17
June	3	19
July	0	15
August	0	12 (1-4 August)
September	23	
October	17	

Part of the increase this year is probably the result of less rainfall than usual in the northern part of the Laotian Panhandle.

However, the increased movement into Laos must also be attributed to the improvements made to the road system in Laos and the need for the North Vietnamese to support their increased force levels in South Vietnam.


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Personnel Infiltration

The rainy season has not significantly limited the number of men the North Vietnamese send south. However, infiltrators arriving in South Vietnam during the months June through September (infiltrators who moved through Laos at least during part of the rainy season) experience increased hardships and higher attrition. North Vietnamese prisoners who have infiltrated during the rainy season report generally lower morale, a higher malaria incidence, slower movement, muddy trails, and slippery footing on rocks.

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The rate of infiltration

into South Vietnam is expected to decline after August. It is not known whether adverse weather or other factors are responsible for the expected decline.

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 21 August 1968	
TO: St/P/C			
ROOM NO.	BUILDING		
REMARKS: Project S-2781, this report was prepared and completed on 7 August. It was a contribution to response to query from General Maxwell Taylor, Executive Office of the President, for data on infiltration.			
FROM: D/I - []			
ROOM NO. 4043	BUILDING	EXTENSION	
FORM NO. 241 1 FEB 55		REPLACES FORM 35-8 WHICH MAY BE USED.	

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